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ABSTRACT

Comparison of data gathered in the late 1970s to data gathered in the early 1990s indicates that while communication researchers remain convinced that effects of intercultural mass media exist, they also acknowledge that no clear, useful theoretical framework exists. Data were analyzed, compared, and reported in the late 1970s from three sites--Iceland, northern Minnesota, and Quebec. Data were gathered concerning television viewing habits, source of television broadcasts (from Canada, the United States, Iceland), or no television at all and the perceived effects of television viewing. Comparison of these studies indicated that: (1) even using the same measures, different cultural settings resulted in different outcomes; (2) the effects of media, interpersonal, and sociolinguistic variables were not uniform for different categories of dependent variables; and (3) changes in attitudes, agendas, and information levels had complex causes with many contributing factors. Comparisons of these studies to those done in the early 1990s indicated that not much had changed. Both sets of studies have the same four problems: the findings across settings were not consistent; the theoretical frameworks were not useful in explaining the inconsistencies; obtaining sufficient control over independent and extraneous forces was difficult; and the strength of the effect was small. Researchers should avoid dogmatic over-generalization of findings in the absence of a suitable theory. (Contains 24 references.) (RS)

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Impacts of Cross-Cultural Mass Media In Iceland, Northern Minnesota, and Francophone Canada in Retrospect

by

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I appreciate the opportunity to be part of this panel. For me it is like a return visit to an old friend, long neglected. Like that visit, this paper is an overview with the perspective of time. It lacks some of the sharp detail of contemporary involvement and puts broad ideas in perspective and, hopefully, adds the richness and appreciation that comes with a little distance.

After a professorial career which focused on traditional teaching and scholarship in cross-cultural mass communication, I turned to the dark side 12 years ago and became a full-time administrator writing mostly about aspects of my administrative work. In this paper, thanks to the kind invitation of Dr. Elasmar, I would like to return to those days of yesteryear and summarize research done ten to fifteen years ago and then make some comparisons with contemporary research. Such a summary including dozens of variables and several papers necessitates that I not provide detailed exposition of the individual variables and their reliability and validity. This information for each variable is available in the original studies and may be perused there.

Data Sets Employed

I will here summarize results from data gathered in three settings: Iceland, Northern Minnesota, and Quebec. Then I will draw some comparisons to current research. I have drawn extensively from the original reports of each of the studies reporting this analysis (Dunn and Josepsson, 1972; Broddason, 1970; Payne and Peake, 1977; Payne, 1978a; Payne, 1978b; Payne and Caron, 1982; Payne and Caron, 1983) and have not given detailed reference to them in each paragraph of this paper.

Icelandic data which I analyzed came from two sources. The first was a study initially conducted by Thorbjörn Broddason with preliminary results made available by the University of Iceland Press in 1970. The second source was a study by Thomas Dunn and Bragi Josepsson with partial results reported to the National Science Foundation in 1972. Data from these two projects were reanalyzed, compared, and reported by myself and colleagues in 1977 and 1978.

The second set of data comes from Northern Minnesota. Data were gathered by myself and sociology methods students in 1977 and were first published in 1978. The third set of data were collected in Quebec in late 1979 by sociology students and professional interviewers under the direction of Dr. André Caron and myself and analyzed and first reported in 1980.

Each of these data sets shares a common design characteristic. Exposure to television signals was controlled by geographic location not viewer choice. In those days when direct satellite broadcast was mostly a glint in homeowners' and media moguls' eyes, it was possible to select matched areas, some of which had TV signals available and some of which did not. Respondents from these areas could be matched and differences in their information levels, attitudes, and behaviors attributed to television affects isolated from the contamination of self-selected viewing and all the predispositional, economic, and class baggage that accompanies those differences. With a little careful site selection, the impact of one culture's television could be examined as it spilled over into other cultures' reception areas.

Icelandic Studies

Two sets of data providing material about cross-cultural mass media impact were gathered in Iceland. One by Thorbjörn Broddason and one by Thomas Dunn and Bragi Josepsson. I recoded and reanalyzed their data and compared my analysis with theirs. Broddason's data were from 601 Icelanders ages 10 to 14. They came from three locations, one received no television (Akureyri), one U.S. TV only (Vestmannaeyjar), and one both US and recently initiated Icelandic TV (Reykjavik). My reanalysis of the Broddason data used four indicators of exposure to U.S. TV (geographic availability of signal, length of TV ownership, frequency of watching, and name recognition of U.S. programs). Correlations between the independent variable measures varied from .4 to .61 and the geographic location was most central to the underlying variable. Dependent variables included positive attitude toward the U.S. (desire to immigrate to the U.S.), knowledge of U.S. political leaders compared to those not covered on U.S. TV, and feelings of fear, anger or sadness which Broddason had hypothesized would be produced by U.S. TV. In each case after the analysis had been performed on the total sample, a separate analysis was conducted for each age, sex, and socioeconomic group and no substantial differences were found between the findings in each of these sub-groups and the total sample.

The Dunn-Josepsson data were collected from 1314 young people between the ages of 9 and 17 in areas which were supposed to have no Icelandic TV (Northwest) or only Icelandic TV (Southwest). Although the data about sampling are less clear in this study, almost 70% of the people living in the no TV area reported having TVs in their homes for over a year. Further analysis indicated that many of these locations could receive U.S. television from an American air base in Iceland. Rather than being non-TV (Icelandic) receiving locations, they were probably TV receiving (U.S.) locations. Icelandic TV was just beginning to be received in these areas and probably played a much less important role.

Eliminating from the Broddason sample those who had actually visited the U.S., there was some indication that high viewing of U.S. TV was associated with preference for the U.S. as a migration site (Taub = .12 $p<.05$) but this was not true for all measures of the independent variable and, therefore, should be accepted with caution (Payne and Peake, 1977). Dunn-Josepsson measured positive attitude toward the U.S. using an adjective checklist . Thirteen of 60 possible relationships were statistically significant ($p<.05$), but the relationships were weak with none exceeding .08 (taub). Again indicating the marginal nature of TV's influence in this study. Further, the attitude shifts were about equally split

between positive and negative (Payne, 1978). A careful analysis of signals available at their sites suggests a reinterpretation of their data indicating that watching U.S. TV may have a slight negative effect on attitudes about Americans (Payne, 1978 p.179)

My analysis of the Brodasson data indicated a very slight and irregular positive effect of U.S. TV watching on knowledge of leaders covered on U.S. TV (Payne and Peake, 1977). The Dunn-Josepsson data about information acquisition indicated that there was no consistent evidence that watching U.S. TV was related to knowledge of political leaders. Given the tenuous nature of the finding in the Brodasson data, perhaps Dunn-Josepsson conclusions are the most accurate ones about information acquisition from the Icelandic data.

Using the Broddason data we also addressed the question of whether U.S. TV produced feelings of fear, anger, or sadness in viewers. Brodasson reported that watching U.S. TV was related to increased levels of fear in young males only. Since this is reported by only 13 of 466 possible cases it should not be over-interpreted. However, the most surprising result from the data was that such feelings were reported more commonly among those viewing the recently inaugurated Icelandic than U.S. TV. We proposed that Icelandic TV, because of its language familiarity, may have had more influence. It is also possible that, since it had only been in operation a few months, those viewing it (and TV) for the first time were more affected than their more media experienced, American media viewing countrymen.

The Minnesota Study

Data were obtained in rural northern Minnesota from three matched (age, income, occupation, education, religion, ethnic origin) sites, one received only Canadian TV, one received both Canadian and U.S. TV, and one received only U.S. TV. An interview was conducted with one adult in each household in the selected areas. Completion rates for the three areas were between 90 and 92% (n=414). In addition the questionnaire was given to all 9th, 10th, and 11th grade students in attendance on a given day in four area high schools. Completion rate was 88% (n=280). Migration into these rural areas was very low.

Three independent variables were employed. Geographic location, percent of time viewing Canadian TV, and percent of time viewing Canadian news programs. The last two variables allowed media viewing variation in the geographic area which received both U.S. and Canadian signals but introduced self-selection as a confounding effect. The correlations (r) between the three independent variable measures ranged from .84 to .76.

The development of dependent variables was much more extensive and sophisticated in this study than in either of the Icelandic studies. Cognitive and affective measures relating to the sending country (Canada), the receiving country (U.S.), and both countries were employed.

In the cognitive area, respondents were asked to name the most important issues facing each country and both countries (the number of issues named was coded as a cognitive measure and the relative placement of them as an agenda setting measure) then to select which was most important for each setting, then to provide some facts about the issue, people involved,

and possible solutions. They were also asked to identify the American meaning of seven Canadian words.

In the attitudinal area I used a large number of scales, many of which had been developed and employed by Sparks (1977) and McCombs (1976) in their studies in New York and Ontario. They measured shift in national identification, attitudes toward ethnic groups in both countries, agenda setting (open ended and paired comparison), and a variety of cultural items such as attitudes about nudity and violence, socialized medicine, and government supported housing which had been proposed in the literature as being different in U.S. and Canadian cultures. A detailed analysis of all questions and their reliability is provided by Payne (1978) and is beyond the scope of this paper.

Twenty-four control variables organized in three areas (other exposure to Canadian media, other exposure to Canada, and socio-economic status) were employed. Correlation analysis was conducted with 0 order and 24th order partial correlations reported with significant other partial data commented on.

The data indicate that there was a minimal affect, for adults and high school students, on cognitive measures relating to the United States (reception country) with only 2 of 12 relationships being above .1 (r). The majority of these small correlations were negative. However, moderate affects were found on cognitive measures about Canada (sending country) with all 18 possible correlations being above .22, eight above .32 and the highest .51. Correlations relating to cognitive issues relating the two countries were generally between those for the separate countries. Tests of significance were not calculated because a population rather than a sample was interviewed, but if significance tests had been used, all of the cognitive variable relationships relating to knowledge of Canada and most of them relating to knowledge of the two countries would have been significant. The application of the 24 control variables had minimal effect on any of the relationships except for the recognition of the American equivalent of Canadian words among high school students where the relationship was substantially reduced by listening to Canadian radio which provided the same information.

Generally speaking, the adult sample attitudes toward the U.S. were unaffected by watching Canadian TV with the following exceptions. Those who watched Canadian TV were slightly more favorable toward blacks than those who watched American TV, and there was some difference in the importance given to specific issues by watchers of Canadian and U.S. TV. These data give some support to the notion that media set people's agendas and that U.S. media portray blacks in an unfavorable light. Viewing Canadian TV was somewhat more related to attitudes about Canada, but generally speaking, the attitude differences were still not strong. Adult viewers of Canadian TV were somewhat less favorable toward Canada ($r=.13$) and had moderately different views about the most important issue facing Canada ($r=.29$ to .36 depending on the independent variable). Insertion of control variables had little effect on the correlations.

For the high school population, the correlations were less consistent and more susceptible to controls. Correlations relating to the U.S. were all small and not substantively significant. Correlations relating to attitudes about Canada did, however, show some important

relationships. Viewers of Canadian TV had more negative evaluations of Canada (r= .27 to .39) and these increased with the addition of the controls. They also had slightly more negative attitudes about French and English Canadians. Finally, like their adult counterparts, they had different views about the most important issue facing Canada (r=.24 to .34).

Two final comments on the Minnesota study are useful. Moderate affects were found relating to cognitions and attitudes about Canada despite the fact that at the time 36% of the material being transmitted over Canadian TV came from the U.S. If the material had all been of Canadian origin the effects on viewers' knowledge and attitudes about Canada could have been stronger. Second, it may be possible that the lack of affect from watching Canadian TV on attitudes and cognitions about the United States results from the 36% of U.S. material that was broadcast over Canadian TV. Thus, they were getting substantial American media exposure from Canada. If the content of Canadian TV had been all Canadian there might have been stronger effects relating to the United States.

The Quebec Study

The Quebec study built on the Minnesota study and used many of the same measures translated into French and adapted to local cultural circumstances. Data were gathered in September of 1979. Two demographically matched cities were selected, one of which had only Francophone television and one of which had Francophone and Anglophone Canadian and American television available over cable. A systematic random sample of persons over 18 years of age in each city was selected and 814 usable interviews were collected (89% return rate).

One measure of TV use grouped viewers into those who had only Francophone TV available in their city, those who had signals of both languages in their city but only Francophone in their homes, and those who had both language TV signals in their homes. Other TV use measures included percent of time viewing U.S. TV and percent of time viewing Anglophone Canadian TV. The range of independent variables was expanded in this study to other media. These measures were language of radio listened to, and magazines and newspapers read.

Controls were employed for visiting or having relatives or friends in Anglophone Canada or the United States, familiarity with English, and socioeconomic status.

Measures of knowledge and attitudes were similar to those used in the Minnesota study except they were extended to Quebec and Europe as well as the United States and Canada. In addition, semantic differential items measuring the evaluation, activity, and potency dimensions, and five items which measured relative preference for Francophone, Anglophone, or American cultural features were included. Discussion of reliability and other statistical issues is contained in Payne (1982).

We examined the relationship between media use (Francophone, Anglophone, American) and the dependent variables separately for each medium except newspapers where use of the anglophone medium was minimal. Then we compared the composite relationship of

media to dependant variables with the relationships resulting from socioeconomic background and from intercultural, interpersonal contact.

Nine of 18 relationships between viewing non-Francophone television (geographically determined measure) and knowledge variables were statistically significant ($p < .05$), and all but one of these dealt with non-Quebec people or issues. The correlations were low (r from .11 to .06) and almost all became non-statistically significant when controls were introduced. Thus, there appears to be only a small effect of increasing knowledge about the U.S., Canada, and Europe from having available non-Francophone television.

Availability of non-Francophone TV was positively and significantly related to six of 12 attitudes toward Canada and eight of 16 toward the U.S. but only one of 12 toward Quebec measures. Those with non-Francophone TV available tended to see Canada and the U.S. more favorably than those who did not. The correlations, though statistically significant, were low (r values between .06 and .12) and were further diminished by controls with only half as many remaining statistically significant.

The same basic pattern appeared to hold when using percent of time viewing U.S. TV as the independent variable. The strongest relationships were with willingness to select American rather than Francophone Canadian food, entertainment, and lodging alternatives.

Correlations between listening to Anglophone radio and the various measures of cognition and attitudes were rare, non-systematic, and small. We concluded that they were probably the result of chance.

Two-thirds of the correlations between reading Anglophone information magazines and knowledge indicators were significant. As with television, these relationships clustered around knowledge of the United States and Europe. Only about a fifth of the relationships between reading English language magazines and attitudes were statistically significant and the rather small correlations were further reduced by the addition of controls.

The multiple correlation between the combined media measures and each dependent variable was also calculated. Ten of the eighteen relating to the knowledge dimension are significant. Four of four for the U.S., three of four for Europe, two of four for Canada, and only one of four for Quebec. This supports the notion that media have the largest impact on information about less familiar areas. However, when controls are added only two of the correlations remain significant and the highest multiple correlation is .10. Thus, affects that cannot be explained by status and interpersonal contact are small and mostly tied to television. Fewer of the multiple correlations with attitudes were significant, the level of association was smaller and more completely eliminated by controls; thus, we conclude that the influence not explainable by status and interpersonal contact is even smaller.

At this point we were lead to conclude that a separate analysis should be conducted to determine the relative impact of media, interpersonal contact, and socioeconomic status on different types of dependent variables. Data from both the Minnesota and the Quebec studies were relevant to this question.

In both studies cross-cultural media exposure had more impact on agenda ranking than interpersonal contact. Intercultural media was also more strongly related to international information acquisition than interpersonal contact in the Minnesota study but less strongly in the Quebec study. The Minnesota data show little intercultural media or interpersonal contact effect on attitudes, but the Quebec data show both, with the media exposure being slightly stronger. None of the differences between intercultural media and intercultural interpersonal exposure are striking.

We also examined the impact of socioeconomic status on all the dependent variables and for the Quebec study the effect of familiarity with the English language. Generally speaking, socioeconomic status in both studies was related to the amount of information respondents acquire, to their attitudes, and to a lesser degree their agendas. In the Quebec study where language is an important variable, it is also associated with the full range of variables. The effects of language and socioeconomic status were, generally speaking, stronger or as strong as those of media or interpersonal contact.

In the Quebec study controlling for language does not significantly reduce the effects of status indicating separate effects. However, when language and status are controlled for, the effects of interpersonal and media cross-cultural contact are substantially reduced and, in most cases, become insignificant.

In a few specific cases interpersonal and media contact retain their significance and are among the strongest relationships in all the data; however, these cases differ across the two settings and for the different measures of the media and interpersonal contact variables indicating the complexity and specificity of the relationships.

Several conclusions were suggested by Payne and Caron (1983) resulting from the comparisons of these studies. These seem to remain legitimate today. First, even using the same measures, different cultural settings resulted in different outcomes. Over-generalization from data in one or even several settings to other settings is dangerous.

Second, the effects of media, interpersonal and sociolinguistic variables are not uniform for different categories of dependent variables. The results lead us to believe that better theory and better measurement will yield more rather than less complexity of findings.

Third, changes in attitudes, agendas, and information levels have complex causes with many contributing factors. Assessment of the role of media in these changes should always be in the context of sophisticated controls for linguistic, socioeconomic, and interpersonal contact variables. None of these variables should be taken out of context.

Thoughts and Reflections

I will not attempt to claim that my review of the current literature is complete or that I have carefully examined **all** the latest theoretical frameworks. After all, that is the purpose of Dr. Elasmar's paper and it would be foolish to think I could accomplish such a task after a 10-year absence from the field. However, as I read through considerable literature from

the past few years, I asked myself what were the real roadblocks and closed doors we encountered 10 years ago and how well have these been passed or opened.

It seems to me that 10 years ago studies of media effects were being conducted in a variety of settings around the world and results were being reported much as they are now. The studies generally had four problems: the findings across settings, and sometimes even in the same studies, were not consistent, the theoretical frameworks were not useful in explaining these inconsistencies in a way that allowed for future prediction, obtaining sufficient control over independent and extraneous sources of variance and attributing causation rather than simply association was difficult, and the strength of effect was small.

Inconsistent Findings

The findings in the studies I have reviewed remain relatively inconsistent. Media effect on attitudes was sometimes positive (Snyder et. al., 1991), sometimes negative (Snyder et. al., 1991; Tan et.al., 1987), sometimes both (Tan et.al., 1986), and sometimes neither (Snyder et. al. 1991). Sometimes intercultural media use appears to increase information levels (Weimann, 1984) sometimes not. Sometimes media affects are toward the programming source country (Weimann, 1984; Tan et. al., 1986; Tan et. al., 1988), sometimes toward the receiving country (Pingree and Hawkins, 1981; Tan et.al., 1987). Sometimes they are related to heavy viewing (Gerbner, 1980:14; Weimann, 1984), sometimes to moderate or light viewing, sometimes to both (Weimann, 1984:188). Sometimes the effect is greatest when other exposure is lacking (Tan et. al., 1986; Tan et. al., 1988; Zhao, 1989), and sometimes when it is present (Pingree and Hawkings, 1981:104). Sometimes associations are reduced by controls (Zhao, 1989) and sometimes not (Tan et.al., 1986). The lack of consistent pattern continues for numerous other dimensions and seems to have a familiar ring to the interloper from the past.

Weak Theoretical Framework

The great variety of findings underlines the importance of a simple, clear, accurate theory to organize the findings and provide predictive power. My first reactions to reviewing the literature for theory were positive. I was especially impressed by the notions of "mainstreaming" (really a media version of regression toward the mean) and "resonance" (Gerbner et.al., 1980) and wondered why I had not been attracted to it when it first came out. I was also attracted to the notion of "cultivation" which was used in several articles (e.g. Weimann, 1984) and the notion that the influence of media is more in structuring our perceptual and organizational processes than in the content of any item or group of items (Altheide and Snow, 1991). I was also attracted to the theory that media is a small part of a complex set of internal and external forces that act on each person, and any impact must be considered in that complex context (Höijer, 1992).

As I attempted to use the various theories, I found myself agreeing with Snyder's conclusion about "media dependency" theory, "Our initial theories seem too general when we examine the specifics of the Belize case." (Snyder, 1991, p130). I came to feel that some theory components of the material I was reading were constructed and almost artificially attached to the first of each article and to the discussion section. Others were central to the article

or book, but too general to have predictive power. They provided a rational for what had been found in the study or refuting them formed such a rationale, but nothing was given that would help much with prediction for new sites and circumstances. In short, the theoretical orientations were more sophisticated than the old notions that American media were all-powerful and generally bad, but not much more useful in practical scientific research or policy development.

Methodological, Statistical, and Control Problems

There are many difficult methodological problems in conducting cross-cultural research. As Snyder (1991:128) says: "Lack of significance [in the relationships proposed] can of course occur because of weaknesses in study design."

One of the most difficult methodological problems for intercultural media research is developing independent variables which are free from contamination and sufficiently strong to produce an effect. Experimental studies eliminated the problem of viewer self- selection by randomly assigning them to different treatment conditions, but such treatments (media exposure) were typically limited, and hence, produced little effect. The alternate of having viewers self-select the amount and nationality of media they use over the years allows the treatment to be much more extensive but confounds the treatment with existing predispositions. Thus, a person's existing predisposition may cause them both to view U.S. TV and have an attitude or piece of knowledge that is also transmitted over U.S. TV. Separating out that which media use caused and that which is a predisposition is especially difficult and has become more rather than less problematic over the last decade. The alternate strategy of simply analyzing media content and assuming impact on people has been widely used in the last ten years, but remains an unattractive option in my judgment.

A second methods problem is the discovery and inclusion of appropriate control variables. Snyder et. al. (1991:118,129), in my judgment, correctly say "The effects of foreign media content depend on structural factors, social factors, and individual variables such as an audience member's education, sex, and age." The inclusion of good interpersonal contact measures caused them to conclude "... interpersonal contacts are much more strongly associated with emigration than is mass media exposure,..." Over the past ten years there appears to be development in these areas. Many studies now control for language familiarity, socioeconomic status, interpersonal contact with people from other cultures, and exposure to the full range of media rather than just television. Still some studies, because of limited variation in these variables, may over-interpret the relative effect of media.

There are, of course, many other methodological and statistical issues which continue to be problematic, for example the appropriate match between statistical technique and level of measurement and the assessment of causation in cross-sectional data (Weimann, 1984; Snyder et.al., 1991). Nevertheless, it seems to one returning to the literature that the level of sophistication has increased somewhat and progress is being made.

Strength of Relationship

One of the striking consistencies across the years is the relatively low level of association between mass media use and the variety of attitudes, behaviors and levels of information acquisition which are analyzed. Studies using correlation techniques typically report most correlations are less than .2. Levels of statistical significance for even the most strongly correlated variables are achieved more through large sample sizes than substantive meaning. Changes in mean distribution or Beta scores employed in other studies also continue to be relatively low. I was heartened to see some cases where these were appropriately labeled as modest (Tan, 1987), "on the weak side of moderate" (Pingree and Hawkins, 1981) and so on.

It may be as Gerbner (1980) says "...The observable independent contributions of television can only be relatively small." But just as an average temperature shift of a few degrees can lead to an ice age or the outcomes of elections can be determined by slight margins, so too can a relatively small but pervasive influence make a crucial difference. The "size" of an "effect" is far less critical than the direction of its steady contribution." (Gerbner et al., 1980:p.14) but I would urge more caution. Weimann's (1984:195) conclusion that "..cultural invasion and TV imperialism may operate through the one way flow of programs [from the U.S.]" should have a heavy emphasis on "may," especially given the dubiousness of the "one way" hypothesis (Haynes, 1984; Stevenson and Cole, 1984).

Concluding Thoughts

I remain convinced that there are effects of intercultural mass media whether it is from the U.S. to Mexico, China, India, or Iceland or from any of those countries to the U.S. or each other. I have found little to change my feeling of 10 years ago that we do not have a clear, useful framework for understanding and predicting the complexity that characterizes those relationships in a variety of intercultural settings. Perhaps such a theory will be provided today or tomorrow, but in its absence, I would urge avoiding dogmatic over-generalization of findings across settings and across variables, and continuing to explore thoroughly the non-media variables which are part of the interconnected causal network. With Golding (1992:503) I would say: "It is clearly always superficial to seek the 'effects' of one institution on another rather than the conditions, economic, social or political, under which certain actions appear to be curtailed or promoted by others. Without a broader social theory in which to locate the concerns of the communication researcher we are bound perennially to lament the inconclusiveness of our research."

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